

## CHAPTER III.

### "OVER THE TOP."

#### MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE. THE "ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION" AROUND VERDUN.

On the night of November 6 we moved into the dugouts of Ft. Vaux, Champ de Tir, and P. C. Normandie. Ft. Vaux, three kilometers northeast of Verdun, is one of the dozen or more strong forts that surround and protect the city. Several of these forts, including Ft. Vaux, fell into the hands of the Germans during their attacks in 1916. But enough of the forts remained uncaptured to keep the Germans out of the city itself.

When we awoke and climbed out of our dugouts the next morning we beheld another wonder of the World War. The wonder of this place, which is like all the territory for miles on the east, north and west of Verdun, is the utter desolation, the completeness and thoroughness of the destruction. Nothing was left standing, not a tree, nor even a bush. The sight was oppressive. The barren, shell torn hills were literally strewn with bones of French and Ger-